

INTRODUCTION OUTLINE

I. (My experience)

In August of 1968, as a newly hired instructor, having just received my masters degree from the University of Florida, I had my heart broken when I walked into my first meeting of the English Department on Cumberland Campus and was told, "No, you're not in this meeting, you have been assigned to the Speech Department". When I had been interviewed in February of that year by Granville Diffie, Sue Pine's later to be brother in law, he had asked if I would consider teaching Speech as well as English and since I graduated in March, could I pick up a few Speech courses since the Junior College really needed some speech people. At UF, the English majors thought themselves to be the elite, and we could do anything. Also because of another English major, Grady Johnson, who had bedazzled me, and who was temporarily filling in as assistant to the President until he reported for his teaching position in the fall, the prospect of staying on a few months was appealing.

I did not know that I had cast lot for life.

Though I had taught Freshman English at UF for two years, those few Speech courses I had taken at the request of Granville Diffie, courses like oral interpretation, theatre courses, drama courses, had not prepared me for the Speech classrooms of Florida Junior College in 1968 .

I had a solid background in English composition, but I was terribly deficient in rhetoric, and for a while, I was off balance to say the least. I didn't know the principles of rhetoric, I didn't know the theory of rhetoric, I didn't know the philosophy or rhetoric, I didn't know the history. I knew some of the techniques, I read the texts, I worked hard, I had a great liberal arts education, but...

I couldn't answer that question students always ask. "Why?" I would hem and haw. and I would sometimes hear myself start to say, "Because I said so."

I went back to the University of Florida, I received a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Public Address. And now when students ask, "Why?", I feel no guilt when I answer, "Because I said so."

II. (Thesis)

Are there really benefits to your taking this course?

III. (Divisions of the thesis)

What is this course going to be about?

What will you gain?

IV. (Relationship/Benefit/Transition)

I know so many of you in this class and I will not individualize or personalize, yet I 'm quite sure I will come close to answering the question, "What will you gain?" for each of you. I know if I miss it you will let me know. Let's take a look.

BODY OUTLINE

I. (First Division of Subject (What is the course going to be about?))

We will begin in ancient Greece around 384 BC in Stagira, a small town in Thrace. Or perhaps we will begin with Corax and Tisios, AKA Clorax and Tissue.

We will address both the philosophy and techniques or principles of rhetoric.

This course will address not only what to say, but how and why to say it.

We will study Aristotle's Rhetoric for "the Rhetoric is the study of the human soul. It is a searching study of the audience.. We must know the nature of the soul. we must know human nature, the ways of reasoning, the emotions and the kind of arguments that will persuade each kind of individual as well as the emotional appeal that will gain their assent.

We will learn not only the questions the students will ask, not only the answers we will give, we will learn the answer to that often asked questions, "WHY?"

II. (Second Division of Subject)(What will you gain?)

For some it is simply the Joy of Learning. That wonderful satisfying fullness. "I know something." "Knowledge is power." It sometimes fills us, not like chocolate, but almost.

And this learning increases us, not like chocolate increases, but in another way. We become more valuable to ourselves. Remember when you received your degrees? No one can take that away from you. And no one can take away from you what you take away from this class.

And by increasing your value through learning, you enrich those around you. We are all teachers and we are teachers of the Liberal Arts.

Some people are workers for they have a specific technique or knack (this is in no way disparaging them), but others know the possibilities, and they apply skills and rules thinkingly.

They think out how to make the most of the circumstances in which they speak, or read, or write, or teach, or play basketball.

To achieve this kind of command involves learning sophisticated ways of thinking about yourself, about the kinds of communicative situations you are likely to enter, and about the possibilities of language, speech, action, and the people who will become the audience. Acquiring that kind of thinking and speaking is a liberal study.

Liberal because it liberates or frees a person.

But primarily it is a liberal study because when a subject has uses that reach well beyond the subject itself, it is common to call the subject liberal or general.

The study is useful in more vocations than one. To command a liberal study helps a person to get more out of other studies while providing useful skills of its own.

The special value of a liberal study is that it introduces you to additional ways you can think about and understand general facts of life. A study deserving to be called Liberal gives you background into which to fit your specialized concerns.

Consider a simple case: You want to plan a house. Professor Susan Hill planned her house, Jay Smith planned his house. If you know house planning as, say, a carpenter might know it, you could plan a solid, roomy house, and that would be all.

But with a broader knowledge of people and society you could plan a solid, roomy house that would suit the real estate market (economics), would conform to the ordinance of the community in which the house is to be built (politics and sociology), would be attractive on the lot on which it is to stand (aesthetics), and would have features that are readily and attractively described so as to make the house salable (communications).

There are many ways in which a knowledge of speaking in public is applicable beyond itself.

I earlier mentioned we are all from the Liberal Arts. Let me add to that some background.

In the Middle Ages, university courses were described as "Arts". These were systems of rules for generating knowledge. The Liberal Arts of Languages and Sciences were complements.

The Sciences were the QUADRIVIUM (kwa driv e em) composed of Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, and Music. The Quadrivium arranged knowledge into systematic bodies of information.

The Languages were the TRIVIUM (triv e em) composed of Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric. The Trivium discovered social significance for the products of Science.

Rhetoric, chief among the courses of the Trivium, liberated students from a single view of a problem and led them to social autonomy.

The divisions of classical rhetoric provide directions for teaching critical thinking skills.

But back to what you will gain. I nudged myself into more of what this course is about.

Let's get back to what you might gain; perhaps I should be truthful with you and tell you what I will gain.

"Trees die at the top." We have all heard that. Well, here at FCCJ a number of top branches have changed color and are beginning to droop. Or should I have said "droop" as in "DROP Plan".

Universities have severely limited degrees in Speech, but the need for Speech Instructors increases

instead of diminishes. And our FCCJ's Advisory Boards are demanding that graduates from UNF, Edward Waters, and JU, teach speech. Our Community Advisory Boards are telling us that our students are often unable to make it through interviews adequately. That they lack the oral skills to function interpersonally within the organization as well as outside with clients. They are saying we must provide more courses that teach these oral communication skills.

So we find our schools of higher learning without credentialed people, without people firmly grounded in rhetoric, without the solid foundation that would make them love the discipline.

This is not the future we rhetoricians want.

We began with the question "What would you gain?"

And now you see we end with the statement of "what I would gain"

For, just as the students you teach each day are the future of America, so too are you who sit in this classroom today, the future of our college.

So do you see now, it is I who will gain, for you become the legacy I hope to leave behind.